

# **Fish Disease Control Order**

## **Angler Fact Sheet**

**September 2007**

**Why are these regulations being put in place?** With the rapid increase in fish diseases invading our state, it has become critical to enlist anglers as allies in this fight to protect their fishing opportunities.

Angler behaviors provide excellent ways to move fish diseases from waterbody to waterbody. Transmission routes include the indiscriminate use of live and frozen baitfish and fish eggs (roe), the movement of live game fish from one waterbody to another and the movement of any container of water including live wells and bilges from waterbody to waterbody. This Order is designed to provide a set of best management practices for anglers to ensure that they are not a vehicle to move diseases around our waters. We do not want anyone to be a cause for fish disease outbreaks.

**Why are there two parts to the regulations?** The first is a set of general provisions that cover both a range of angler actions and provide for a mechanism for certified disease-free bait to be available for anglers. The second part of the Order directly addresses issues with specific fish diseases. This section will change only when necessary to address new diseases.

Fisheries Division will manage specific fish diseases using “Management Areas” as we can only manage around fish diseases and not eliminate them. The idea is to keep the disease-free areas as far as possible from those areas that are positive and to place a buffer area in between these areas. The system is designed to slow the movement of potentially infected fish to new waters. There are three “named disease” Management Areas: 1) a Positive Management Area where the disease is known to be present; 2) a Surveillance Management Area where the disease is not known to be present but is likely to show up soon; and 3) a Free Area where the disease has not been found and is not likely to be soon.

**How will this Order affect me as an angler?** There are six key areas that anglers will need to pay attention to:

1. The list of Prohibited Fish Species that is attached to the Fish Disease Order and periodically updated on our website ([www.michigan.gov/dnrfishing](http://www.michigan.gov/dnrfishing)) is important as this lists the species affected by the Order.
2. You will need to keep your receipt with you if fishing with any baitfish and roe purchased from bait shops that include species on the Prohibited Fish Species list. The receipt is valid for 7 days and will tell anglers which disease Management Areas the purchased bait can be used in.
3. If you collect your own bait you will need to know where you can use the bait and which waters are in which disease Management Areas.
4. You can use bait including live, dead, frozen and parts of fish only on a hook **if** the baitfish or fish species is on the Prohibited Species List. This includes roe from the species listed on the Prohibited Species List.

5. Anglers may not move live gamefish from waterbody to waterbody, or stock any fish (including baitfish) into any waterbody without a stocking permit from the State. This includes both gamefish and baitfish found on the Prohibited Species List.
6. You will need to drain all water from live wells and bilges upon leaving a waterbody.

**Which fish species are currently on the Prohibited Fish Species list?**

- A. Prohibited Fish Species that are typically used as live bait include emerald shiners, spottail shiners, and white suckers. Other species occasionally used as bait that are on the Prohibited Species List include bluntnose minnows, trout perch, gizzard shad, shorthead redhorse and silver redhorse.
- B. Prohibited Fish Species that are typically used as cut bait and are usually purchased frozen include gizzard shad and Pacific herring.
- C. Prohibited Fish Species that are commonly used for their roe include Chinook salmon, coho salmon, pink salmon, brown trout, and steelhead.
- D. Fathead minnows, golden shiners, alewives and Atlantic herring are currently **not** on the list at this time.

**What is included as bait in these regulations?** Bait includes all live or dead species of fish, or parts of fish that are used by anglers to catch fish that are included on the Prohibited Fish Species list. This also includes roe and frozen fish including cut bait that are included as fish species on the Prohibited Fish Species list.

Bait, both baitfish and roe, on the Prohibited Fish Species list can only be used if attached to a hook. Anglers may use single salmon eggs and spawn sacks. Anglers cannot broadcast roe from species on the Prohibited Fish Species list if they are not on a hook. The broadcasting of large numbers of potentially infected roe is an excellent way to spread a disease in a waterbody which is why we decided to limit the use of roe to only on a hook.

These regulations do not include wigglers, leeches or crayfish. They are **not** covered by these regulations.

**What will the receipt say and how long will it be valid?** The receipt will indicate the species purchased and amount, date, purchaser, and tell you where you can use the bait. The receipt is valid for 7 days.

**Where can I use purchased bait that is of the species on the Prohibited Fish Species list?** a) certified disease-free bait can be used anywhere and provides the maximum flexibility for use; b) uncertified bait from disease-free Management Area waters can be used anywhere in the state; c) uncertified bait from Surveillance Management Area waters can be used in Surveillance and Positive Management Areas but not in disease-free Management Area waters; and d) uncertified bait from Positive Management Area waters can only be used in the Positive Management Area. The location that you can use the bait should be clearly marked on your receipt and if not, be sure to make ask that it is before leaving the bait shop.

The bait shops will receive an information package to assist anglers on the locations that bait can be used from their shop.

**Where can I use bait that I collect that are species on the Prohibited Species list?** a) angler collected bait from disease-Free Management Area waters can be used anywhere in the state; b) angler collected bait from Surveillance Management Area waters can be used in Surveillance and Positive Management Areas but not in disease-Free Management Area waters; and c) angler collected bait from Positive Management Area waters can only be used in the Positive Management Area.

**Where is the VHS Positive Management Area?** This will periodically change so be sure to check the Fisheries Division website ([www.michigan.gov/dnrfishing](http://www.michigan.gov/dnrfishing)). Currently, the VHS Positive Management Area includes all waters in Lake Huron, the St. Clair River, Lake St. Clair, the Detroit River, and Lake Erie along with their tributary streams up to the first fish barrier if one exists. The key here is if Great Lakes fish can get to the stream and use it then it is part of the Positive Management Area.

Upstream fish barriers on Lake Erie tributary streams include the Raisin River dams in Monroe, and the Belleville Lake or French Landing Dam on the Huron River.

Upstream fish barriers on the Detroit River tributary streams include the Ford Estate Dam in Dearborn on the Rouge River.

Upstream fish barriers on Lake Huron tributary streams include Frankenmuth Dam on the Cass River, Mott Dam on the Flint River, Chesaning Dam on the Shiawassee River, St. Louis Dam on the Pine River, Lake Isabella Dam on the Chippewa River, Sanford Dam on the Tittabawassee River, Foote Dam on the Au Sable River, 9<sup>th</sup> Street Dam on the Thunder Bay River, and Cheboygan Dam on the Cheboygan River.

**Where is the VHS Surveillance Management Area?** This will periodically change so be sure to check the Fisheries Division website ([www.michigan.gov/dnrfishing](http://www.michigan.gov/dnrfishing)). Currently, the VHS Surveillance Area includes Lake Michigan, Grand Traverse bays and bays de Noc, and the St. Mary's River along with their tributary streams up to the first fish barrier if one exists. This Management Area also includes all inland waters above the first fish barrier to Great Lakes fish in the Lake Huron, St. Clair River, Lake St. Clair, Detroit River, and Lake Erie watersheds.

Upstream fish barriers on Lake Michigan tributary streams include Calkins Bridge on the Kalamazoo River, Croton Dam on the Muskegon River, Hesperia Dam on the White River, Hart Dam on the South Branch of the Pentwater River, Hamlin Lake Dam on the Sable River, Tippy Dam on the Manistee River, Boardman Lake Dam on the Boardman River, Elk Rapids Dam on the Elk River, Petoskey Dam on the Bear River, Escanaba Dam on the Escanaba River, and the Park Mill Dam on the Menominee River.

The lowest most dam on the Manistique River was partially breached and the river system is open to Great Lakes fish.

Both the St. Joseph and Grand Rivers have extensive and fully functional fishways that allow Great Lakes fish passage to much of their watersheds. The St. Joseph River does not have a

Great Lakes fish barrier up to the Twin Branch Dam in Mishawaka, Indiana. The Grand River has Great Lakes fish passage up to the Moores Park Dam in Lansing. Key Grand River tributaries that have Great Lakes fish access include the Rogue River to Rockford Dam, the Flat River to Lowell Dam, the Thornapple River to the Ada Dam, Prairie Creek (the entire system), Fish Creek to the Hubbardston Dam, the Maple River to the Elsie Dam, and the Red Cedar River (entire system).

**Where is the VHS Free Management Area?** This will periodically change so be sure to check the Fisheries Division website ([www.michigan.gov/dnrfishing](http://www.michigan.gov/dnrfishing)). Currently, the VHS Free Area includes Lake Superior and all tributary streams to Lake Superior along with all inland waters of Lake Michigan and the St. Mary's River above the first fish barrier if one exists.

**Can I move live fish from where I catch them and what about catch and release fishing such as in tournaments?** Anglers cannot move live fish on the Prohibited Species List from one waterbody to another. Anglers are welcome to take fish home that are dead as long as it is legal to do so and harvest limits are followed.

Anglers are absolutely allowed to catch and release fish. Anglers who are catching and releasing fish must release the fish back into the same water or in a connecting body of water to that water so long as those fish can freely move between the original location of capture and the location of release. There cannot be a fish barrier, such as a dam without fish passage, between where the fish was caught and where it is released.

The regulation also includes the movement of live baitfish on the Prohibited Species List from one waterbody to another. You can take live baitfish with you to fish a waterbody and can use them on a hook on that water. **Anglers may not release their live baitfish upon leaving a waterbody.**

The movement of live fish from one waterbody to another is one of the key ways that anglers can be a significant factor in spreading fish diseases. We do not want to see our fisheries resources affected by major fish kills that could be avoided by good practices by our anglers.

**What about live wells and bilge water?** All live wells and bilges must be drained when you leave a waterbody. When you take your boat out of the water after a fishing trip, drain all water from your boat when it is on the boat ramp. The regulation prohibits the movement of water in bilges or live wells once off the water and on roads. The movement of infected water from one waterbody to another is one of the key ways that anglers can be a significant factor in spreading fish diseases.